



The shortest possible lead time

Staffordshire-based KMF (Precision Sheet Metal) Ltd has invested in a second Salvagnini P4 panel-bending machine. Joining KMF's existing P4 and two Amada Astros robot press brakes in the company's 80,000ft² facility in Newcastle under Lyme, the new machine can fold ferrous material up to 2.5mm thick and aluminium up to 3.2mm thick. It operates with minimal set-up times and features automatic loading.

Keith Nichill, the business improvement manager at KMF, says: "The installation of the Salvagnini, complemented by additional invest-

ment in the latest-technology Trumpf Trubend 7036, will help us to further enhance our automated production processes, in line with our drive to offer a consistent and reliable 24/7 manufacturing facility that is truly capable of offering small-batch production within the shortest possible lead time.

"By selectively replacing manually operated machines, we are now in the position to fully automate products that previously required two people to manually load and support the material during the folding process. The new equipment also addressed health-and-safety issues."

Engine specialist moving on

Coventry Boring & Metalling (CBM), which mainly restores the engines of classic cars and has worked in a former World War I workshop in Earlsdon since the end of the Second World War, has expanded to a new site at Fletchworth Gate. Director Peter Donnelly said: "There was a lot of history in the old building; not only was it used to manufacture engines in the last war, but it has also been used to house elephants for a circus. CBM arrived in the 1960s, and the building has been a good home to us, but we needed bigger, newer premises.

"Business has remained quite busy for us, despite the downturn. We receive work from across the country and a fair bit from abroad too, because there are very few companies in Europe that have the expertise we have built up. We're extremely positive about the future."

Long-term future of Michelin plant secure

The Government has announced that it will provide funding of £3.9 million to Michelin's Stoke-on-Trent plant. The tyre manufacturer said this would help safeguard the long-term future of the site. The funding will go towards a five-year upgrade of the Remix truck tyre retreading operation.

Plant manager Peter Marsh said: "I am

delighted to announce this significant investment, which secures the long-term future of our Stoke plant. With this assistance, we will be able to upgrade the factory to re-manufacture the latest generation of Michelin Durable Technologies truck and bus tyres, and so offer the customer products with even greater performance."

Warwick firm helps to develop armoured vehicle

Warwick-based manufacturer Parker Hannifin has helped design and develop an armoured vehicle — the Ranger — that provides at least three-times the protection available from other vehicles currently being used by the Ministry of Defence. Working in collaboration with Dorset-based Universal Engineering, Parker manufactured the vehicle's hydraulic units, including the engine cooling-

system fan units. Work carried out also included the rear ramp actuation mechanism, rear steering assembly, emergency ramp opening and the auxiliary power unit fans, which provide the power if the main engine fails.

Martin Lattimer, Parker Hannifin's business development manager, said: "As one of the world's leading specialists in motion and

In brief . . .

► When the breakdown of an old inverter that drives the air-flow through a wind tunnel at Coventry University brought student research to a stop, Leicester-based Modern Drives & Controls stepped in with a Lenze IP65 enclosed SMV inverter that does not need a panel for mounting. Two working days later, the installation was complete, and the wind tunnel was back in service.

► Chinese auto manufacturer NAC has won its High Court battle with a Worcestershire company over the MG logo. Judge Sir William Blackburne said the Nanjing Automobile Corporation acquired the rights to the MG trademarks and logos when it bought the assets of the failed MG Rover from administrators in 2005. He ordered Sports & Racing Europe to stop using the famous octagonal logo and name on its MG X Power 'super car'. The judge ruled that the Tenbury Wells firm was infringing the marks and had no entitlement to them. He rejected the argument by the British company that the trademark rights had never been acquired by NAC.

► A 'green' technology group has unveiled plans for a testing rig for offshore wind farms. The Government-funded Energy Technologies Institute (ETI), in Loughborough, said the rig — in Blyth, Northumberland — would provide a lower-cost alternative to the expensive process of testing turbines at sea. ETI said it would help manufacturers improve on existing technology and produce more-reliable machines in future. Two competing designs — from Convertteam and Horiba Instruments — will be presented to the ETI at the end of May. The rig should be up and running by the end of 2011.

► The new owner of a car parts manufacturer and distributor said there were no plans to axe any of its 200 workers in Leicestershire. Klarius Group, which has its UK HQ in Blackpool, acquired Quinton Hazell Group, of Hinckley, from Affinia Group of the USA for an undisclosed sum a few weeks ago. Quinton Hazell employs 200 people at its head office and UK distribution hub in Hinckley, along with 500 others at manufacturing and distribution bases in France, Germany, Italy and Spain. Tony Wilson — chairman and director of Klarius — said that, although the Lancashire-based firm was also a major player in the manufacture and supply of car parts, the two businesses were not rivals, and the deal put both organisations in a stronger position.